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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE — Radio Service — OFFICE OF INFORMATION

HOMEMAKERS' CHAT Thursday, August 29, 1940

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "MORE CANNING QUESTIONS." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture. Farmers' Bulletin 1762-F available.

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August and September are the months when there are many canning questions in the mail. Today one woman wants to know about canning chicken, another how to can mustard greens, and the third writer wants to can mint sauce. Let's see what the Bureau of Home Economics in the United States Department of Agriculture has to say about these questions.

First, about that mint sauce. The Bureau doesn't advise canning mint sauce, but suggests that a supply of mint leaves may be dried for use in this flavorful sauce when fresh mint is not available. Dry the mint just as you would dry celery tops, parsley leaves, or other savory herbs. Use a warm oven or some other warm, dry place. Store the mint in a covered jar where it will keep clean and dry.

Next question: "Is there any method for canning mustard greens, other than the cold pack?" The Bureau's canning specialists say that hot-pack canning after a short precooking is better than the cold-pack method for most vegetables, including greens. Mustard greens, like spinach and other leafy vegetables, must be canned in a steam pressure canner--because a high canning temperature is necessary, if they are to keep safely. Hot packing of non-acid vegetables, such as greens, shortens the processing time.

Wilt the greens in hot water and then pack them hot, so they will do most of their shrinking before you fill the cans. You don't pack any greens in Number 3 tin cans, because it is so difficult for the heat to penetrate to the center of such a large container. You can use plain tin cans of Number 2 size, or pint or quart glass jars.

Farmers' Bulletin 1762-F, the "canning bulletin," as it's popularly known, tells how to can all the common vegetables and fruits properly, and also meats and chicken. But in case some of you have mustard greens or other greens waiting to be picked, and can't wait until you get a copy of the bulletin, here are the Bureau's directions for canning greens:

"Pick over the greens, discarding any imperfect leaves and tough, fibrous stems. Wash carefully through several waters. Precook by simmering in an uncovered vessel for 5 minutes, or until the greens are wilted. (Do not boil.) Pack hot into containers, but take care not to have too solid a pack. Use the hot liquid from the simmered greens to cover them in the containers. Add 1 teaspoonful of salt to each quart. Process immediately in the steam pressure canner. Pint glass jars require 60 minutes at 15 pounds pressure, quart glass jars, 65 minutes, Number 2 tin cans, 55 minutes."

There you have the correct directions for canning mustard or any kind of greens. Now we come to the question about canning chicken. The writer of this letter asks, "Can I can a whole chicken, weighing about 1-1/2 pounds?"

And the Bureau of Home Economics says, "Yes, you could, but don't,"--or words to that effect. As far as the actual canning goes, you can put up a very small chicken weighing as little as 1-1/2 pounds, but why bother? The texture and flavor of the meat is not so good when canned as that of a more mature bird, such as a two-year old hen.

Therefore, instead of trying to can the small chickens, the Bureau advises this woman to use the cockerels for frying or broiling and save the pullets as the nucleus of a laying flock. But at this time of year it is customary to cull out the poor layers among the older birds--the ones that will not "earn their keep" in the next few months, leaving the young birds to put on a little more weight. Why not can some of these unprofitable hens?

Here's how you can an older chicken:

Dress the hens you have selected for canning. Remove the lungs, kidneys, and eggs. Cut the chicken into serving size pieces and separate into 3 piles: the meaty pieces, like the breasts, thighs, legs, and upper wing joints; the bony pieces, such as the backs, wings, necks, and feet after skinning; and third, the giblets. Do not can the giblets with the other meat. In fact, if you have a good many, you might can the livers alone, the gizzards and hearts together. You can remove the chicken skin or not, as you like. Trim off surplus lumps of fat.

Make a broth of the bony pieces. You'll need it as liquid to fill up the jars. If these pieces have a good deal of meat on them, you can strip it off and can it in small pieces. If you like, you can add 5 tablespoons of granulated gelatin to each quart of broth, to make a nicely jellied canned product. Moisten the gelatin first in a little of the cold liquid, dissolve in the hot broth.

You may can the meaty pieces either with or without the bone. The chicken is better flavored when canned <u>with</u> the bone, and is processed in a shorter time. You precook the chicken in the oven or in water. Then pack hot and can in the steam pressure cooker the required length of time. There's a time-table for canning chicken in Farmers' Bulletin 1762, which we mentioned before. Better send for the bulletin and have this time-table before you, rather than try to remember the number of minutes required to process each kind of pack and all the different containers. Generally speaking, boned chicken is denser than chicken on the bones, and takes longer to process. For example, a Number 2 size can of chicken <u>on</u> the bone takes 55 minutes at 15 pounds steam pressure, whereas the same size can takes <u>85</u> minutes if the chicken has been removed from the bones.

And, by the way, there's an abundance of turkey on hand this fall. The food specialists suggest that you might serve the more attractive parts as "turkey steaks" and can the less shapely pieces the same way you can an older chicken.

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